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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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All workers need union, whatever their language

Solidarity! Mine safety courses in Spanish

EDITORIAL

Support workers' struggles to unionize all miners, native-born and immigrant, whatever their language may be! Solidarity! Organize union-controlled mine-safety courses in Spanish. Translate information needed by miners into the languages they speak.

That needs to be labor's response to cynical efforts by Massey Energy subsidiary Sidney Coal to drive a wedge among miners in Kentucky by pitting native-born workers in the area against "non-English-speaking immigrants."

The coal bosses' utter contempt for miners, *all miners*, couldn't be clearer. According to a statement by Sidney

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65 coal miners in Mexico trapped underground



AP photos by Juan Montano (above); LM Otero (right)

Above: Rescue workers walk near site of Grupo Mexico mine near town of San Juan de Sabinas, Mexico, where 65 miners were trapped underground after methane gas explosion February 19. Right: Coal miner Julian Rodríguez takes break a day later from effort to rescue trapped workers.

BY ANTHONY DUTROW AND JOSÉ ARAVENA

SAN JUAN DE SABINAS, Mexico, February 22—The mile-long road to the Pasta de Conchos #8 mine here, where 65 miners have been trapped since February 19, is lined by hundreds of cars. Relatives of the miners, along with thousands of other workers and volunteers from the area, have gathered while rescue teams continue to dig through the collapsed tunnels. Families are staying overnight in large tents, and volunteers are cooking donated food around the clock. The mine is located about 85 miles south of the Texas border city of Eagle Pass.

No contact has been made with any of these miners in the three days since a methane gas explosion caused three main tunnels into the coal mine to cave in, entrapping the workers underground. Hope of finding their relatives and friends alive is fading among many gathered here.

Two new collapses in the early morning hours of February 21 further delayed rescue operations. Miners' relatives, angry about the lack of information about the trapped miners, tried to force their way into the mine that day. They were

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Two more miners die in Kentucky, Maryland

Toll: 24 in seven weeks

Massey to use immigrants to divide mine workers

BY PAUL PEDERSON

HAZARD, Kentucky—Two coal miners were killed February 16–17 while working underground in mines in eastern Kentucky and western Maryland. The toll in coal mines across the United States has now risen to 21 in the first seven weeks of 2006, compared to 22 for all of 2005. Three other miners at rock and gravel operations have also perished on the job this year.

At the same time, coal companies, pushing to increase production in the middle of a boom in coal prices, are

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Judge throws out defamation suit by Utah coal boss against two dailies

Holds off decision on motions to dismiss case against 'Militant,' 16 Co-Op miners, UMWA

BY PAUL MAILHOT

SALT LAKE CITY—At the conclusion of a four-hour hearing here February 17 on a sweeping lawsuit by C.W. Mining, the owners of the Co-Op coal mine, Federal Judge Dee Benson threw out defamation claims against the *Salt Lake Tribune* and *Deseret Morning News*, Utah's main dailies. The judge also awarded the two newspapers attorneys fees for having to defend themselves in court. Benson said the case against the two dailies was "borderline" frivolous and improper.

The judge held off a decision on eight other motions before him. The *Militant*, United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), 16 miners fired by C.W. Mining in December 2004 for trying to organize a union, and Utah Jobs with Justice—which have also requested dismissal of the case and attorneys fees—all remain in the lawsuit. Benson said he needed more time to consider these motions and would deal with them in a subsequent written ruling. No date is set for when he will issue such a ruling.

Before the hearing, attorneys for the company and the oil workers union PACE agreed to release this union from the lawsuit.

The C.W. Mining lawsuit was filed

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Miners support labor defense case

BY TAMAR ROSENFELD

WINDOW ROCK, Arizona—On the eve of the February 17 federal court hearing in Salt Lake City (see article above), the campaign to defeat the C.W. Mining retaliatory lawsuit got a boost among western coal miners.

International Union of Operating Engineers Local 953 near Farmington, New Mexico, invited Alyson Kennedy and Tamar Rosenfeld to speak about the Militant Fighting Fund—which is organizing the *Militant*'s public defense campaign in the case—to their February 15 meeting. This majority Navajo local organizes surface and underground coal miners at BHP Billiton and was a strong backer of the Co-Op miners' union-organizing struggle.

Wars Peterman, president of the lo-

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'Thousands think what's in that paper'

'Militant' subscription renewal effort gains momentum

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

"Last week a woman gave a donation to the *Militant* to help get the paper around," said Jacquie Henderson from Houston in a February 22 note to the *Militant*. "She bought two issues and gave an extra $3. She told Tom Leonard, who was selling the paper from a table in a working-class neighborhood, to keep it up. 'It's important,' she said, 'because thousands of us think what's in that paper. You don't know it because we are kind of quiet. I want to help more people get the paper.'"

This response is becoming more common across the United States and other countries as *Militant* supporters make progress in the seven-week effort to increase the paper's long-term readership.

New and repeat readers are signing up, particularly in the coalfields. Many say they have recently gotten a new appreciation for the *Militant*'s reports on union organizing and other struggles.

"Samuel Johnson, president of the United Mine Workers local at the McKinley mine in Window Rock, Arizona, told Alyson Kennedy last week that he wasn't so sure about the *Militant* earlier," said Tamar Rosenfeld from Salt Lake City, who visited the area February 16. "But he got a subscription recently and said he is convinced it's a good paper. He said he read the column about sales of the paper at the McKinley mine a couple of weeks

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Also Inside:

Federal gov't starts eviction from hotels of 40,000 Katrina evacuees

BY ANTHONY DUTROW

NEW ORLEANS—"The hotel tells you 'No, no, no. We're not evicting you. You can get an extension from FEMA. But you're not authorized to stay here!'" said Adrian Thomas, a musician from New Orleans. Thomas is one of the 40,000 residents of this city, their homes destroyed last September in Hurricane Katrina, who now face eviction from the subsidized hotel rooms they have stayed in since.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) set a February 13 deadline to evict families from some 12,000 hotel rooms across the country, mostly in the Gulf Coast region. U.S. District Judge Stanwood Duval denied a motion that day filed on behalf of those slated for eviction.

"I'm lucky because I have a place to go. Lots of others, including many families, are being booted out with no place to go or to put their belongings," said Thomas. "It's like pulling teeth to get the trailers from FEMA and now the deadline is coming up for lots of families."

On the eve of the evictions, these reporters saw hundreds of trailers just arriving on rail carriers. According to the government's figures, 167,000 homes in New Orleans were severely damaged or destroyed by the flooding.

FEMA has begun setting up the trailer parks in several locations in the city. To get in line for a trailer, however, working people left homeless by the storm face long delays and a maze of red tape.

Natoria Hawkins, a fast-food worker, and Chad Brown, a construction worker, now both unemployed, just moved in to one of the first trailer parks FEMA set up. Before Katrina hit they had an apartment in the Mid-City area of New Orleans. They were evacuated to Baton Rouge and stayed there four months. "We put in our request for the trailer in October but we didn't get to move in here until three weeks ago," Hawkins said.

There are about 92 of the trailers sitting on a converted athletic field surrounded by a chain-link fence. Security guards contracted by FEMA check all those going in and out.

"It's like a prison," said Billy Christoph, a carpenter who just moved in to the park a week ago with his newborn daughter and fiancée. "This is supposed to be my home, but I can't park my car inside the park. There's a 10:00 p.m. curfew for all visitors, and if you're not on their list, they won't let you in. At first they wouldn't let my fiancée through the gate but she's on the list now."

Christoph said he signed two of the petitions that have been circulated by residents to demand that FEMA relax these rules. "I really do appreciate the help I got when I was evacuated to Kentucky, the trailer and other help, but this isn't right," he said.

As the federal government was carrying out the evictions, Louisiana Stadium and Exposition District officials announced that FEMA would pick up 90 percent of the $182 million tab for refurbishing the hurricane-damaged Superdome. They announced the stadium would open for the fall season as the home field for the New Orleans Saints.

José Aravena contributed to this article.

Philadelphia: 1,000 rally for immigrant rights



Militant/Osborne Hart

PHILADELPHIA—More than 1,000 people, mostly immigrants from Latin America and East and Southeast Asia, gathered at Constitution Center here February 14 to oppose attacks on the rights of immigrants. Banner reads: "Immigrants united, will never be defeated." Protesters opposed legislation in U.S. Congress that calls for extending a fence along U.S.-Mexico border, increasing penalties for document fraud, and mandating felony charges for those without proper documents. Organizers urged workers from around the region to take the day off to join the rally. They said a concurrent protest in Georgetown, Delaware, where many poultry workers live, drew 2,000.

—GEORGE CHALMERS

Nickel miner dies in explosion at BHP Billiton in Australia

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia—Nickel miner Mark Quinn was killed February 3 in an underground explosion at the BHP Billiton Leinster mine some 950 kilometers (about 600 miles) northeast of Perth in the state of Western Australia.

Quinn, 32, worked for McMahon's, a mining contractor. He was reportedly working alone about 900 meters underground when the explosion occurred. Operations at the Leinster mine have been halted while an investigation by the company and state government authorities is carried out.

This is the fourth death at a BHP Billiton plant in Western Australia since 2000. Almost two years ago a worker was killed in a gas explosion at the company's Boodarie hot briquetted iron plant at Port Hedland. In April 2004 a man was killed at its Nelson Point facility, also at Port Hedland. And in May 2000 a truck driver was killed at a BHP Pilbara iron ore operation in the state.

Three miners were rescued January 3 from the Avebury nickel mine in northwest Tasmania after being trapped a half-mile underground by a fire.

The three survived the blaze, caused by a fire on an ore truck inside the mine, by taking refuge in a steel rescue chamber equipped with 72 hours of oxygen. They were rescued eight hours after the fire broke out.

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Pacific Islands: Send NZ$50 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the *Militant*'s views. These are expressed in editorials.

Miners die in Kentucky, Maryland

Continued from front page
attempting to undercut working-class solidarity by trying to pit native-born workers against immigrants in order to weaken prospects for unionization and increase profits.

In December, Charles Bearse, president of Sidney Coal Co., a Massey Energy subsidiary, told the Kentucky Mining Board he had "identified Hispanic workers who want to come to the area and train to become miners." He asked that the state make an exception to its law requiring all mine workers to be fluent in English so the company can hire non-English-speaking immigrants.

Massey is the largest coal company in West Virginia and Kentucky. All but 3 percent of its workforce is nonunion. Three of this year's mine deaths occurred at Massey operations.

"It's common knowledge that the work ethic of the Eastern Kentucky worker has declined from where it once was," said the document the company submitted to the state mining board, according to the February 7 *Lexington Herald-Leader*. Stating Kentucky needs an additional 3,500 miners, it continued: "Compounding the worker shortage is that attitudes have changed among the existing workforce, which affects attendance, drug use, and, ultimately, productivity."

"This is the equivalent of an obscene gesture from Massey to every working man and woman in Eastern Kentucky and Southern West Virginia," said Cecil Roberts, president of United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), according to a February 16 union press release. "It says a lot about what Massey thinks about the people who live and work there." Roberts called Massey's proposal "simply outrageous."

"The UMWA does not oppose Latino workers in America's coal mines," the union statement said. "We're fighting right now for Mexican immigrants in Utah who are struggling to form a union at their mine after being exploited for years," Roberts said. "Over 40 Mexican immigrants at C.W. Mining's Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah, have been trying to organize with the UMWA for over two years, and are awaiting a ruling from the National Labor Relations Board upholding their December 2004 representation election." (See also front-page article on C.W. Mining defamation suit.)

"C.W. Mining was paying these workers under $8.00 per hour, with no benefits," Roberts continued. "Working conditions in the Co-Op mine were terrible, and the workers were subjected to intimidation and harassment if they spoke up…. Now Massey comes along and is trying to set up the same scenario in Eastern Kentucky. We've seen this before. Our Union was founded by immigrants who were brought to this country by the coal barons of the late 19th Century. They couldn't speak to each other. The companies exploited them, playing one group off the other and keeping each suspicious of the other. They courageously overcame all that to form the UMWA in 1890."

"We welcome diversity in our Union, because we know it makes us stronger," Roberts said. "And we will fight against exploitation of miners wherever it occurs and to whomever it occurs."

The big-business press is trying to paint the impression most miners in the area oppose immigrants coming into the mines. "Many eastern Kentucky miners worry that bringing non-English-speaking Latinos underground would force them to accept lower wages and lead to a decline in mine safety," said an article in the February 20 *Los Angeles Times*.

Many miners, however, point out the problem is not immigrant workers making it worse for the native-born but the coal companies' profit drive. "I won't get in the way of any man working. I don't care where he's from," said a coal miner in McRoberts, Kentucky, who worked in nonunion mines for 20 years and is granted anonymity to avoid retribution by the coal bosses. "They need the union in those mines because these companies are just going to try to keep pushing down the pay and making it unsafe for every miner."

The miner, who was seriously injured in a roof fall, said, "Ninety percent of injuries and all deaths on the job can be prevented," adding that "the bosses are the ones endangering workers' lives."

On February 16 Timothy Caudill, 33, a roof bolter at TECO Energy's Hazard #4 mine near the town of Hazard, in Eastern Kentucky, was killed in a roof collapse.

According to the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration, there have been 18 reported roof collapses at Hazard #4 in the past two years.

Since it was purchased by TECO in September 2001, the mine has received 1,242 citations for safety violations, an average of 281 a year. Of those, 267 were deemed "significant and substantial." By comparison, the Sago Mine in West Virginia, where 12 coal miners died after being trapped underground following an explosion in January, had 208 citations in 2005.

On February 17, Willard Miller, 35, was crushed between two pieces of equipment at the Mettiki coal mine in Western Maryland. Coal bosses there tried to brush off any responsibility. Adrienne Ottaviani of the Maryland Coal Association said Miller's death "wasn't anything to do with any safety violation—it was like an automobile accident," reported the *Cumberland Times-News*. Miller is the second miner to die in this mine. Another worker was killed in a roof collapse there in 1999.

Both companies have been pressing to expand production. Mettiki's web site says the mine's production capacity has been recently increased through two "small-scale third-party mining operations."

TECO boasts on its website it is expanding annual production from 7 million to 10 million tons. The TECO subsidiary that owns Hazard #4 increased coal production by 17 percent from 2004 to 2005. Since 2001, the company has purchased or opened 16 mines in Kentucky—all of them nonunion.

Sam Manuel contributed to this article.

Farmers in Ontario rally for a living income



Militant/John Steele

GUELPH, Ontario—Some 700 farmers rallied at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture building here February 14 demanding government action to implement a "Risk Management Program" to increase income for farmers. Commodity prices have fallen, while input costs like fuel and fertilizer have risen sharply. The action was built by a coalition of farmers from different produce sectors called Farmers Feed Cities! Arriving in buses and driving tractors, pickup trucks, and tractor-trailers with farm machinery, the farmers, many of whom produce crops of corn, soybeans, and wheat, came from many parts of rural and southwestern Ontario. "How would you feel about going to work and having to pay to do that every day?" Aarron Legge told the *Militant*. "We need a long-term plan, not a band-aid." Legge was referring to the fact that many farmers ended the last growing season with a negative income. The action was one of several organized over the past couple of months by Farmers Feed Cities! Another demonstration is being planned for March 9.

—JOHN STEELE

'Militant' Subscription Renewal Campaign
January 21–March 13, 2006
Week 4 of 7

Country/City	Quota	Sold	%	Renewals
NEW ZEALAND				
Auckland	**25**	**20**	**80%**	**12**
Christchurch	**10**	**7**	**70%**	**2**
N.Z. Total	**35**	**27**	**77%**	**14**
AUSTRALIA*	**30**	**20**	**67%**	**11**
ICELAND	**12**	**8**	**67%**	**3**
SWEDEN	**36**	**22**	**61%**	**12**
CANADA	75	41	55%	24
U.S.				
Twin Cities	**70**	**56**	**80%**	**27**
Detroit	**4**	**3**	**75%**	**0**
Chicago	**40**	**28**	**70%**	**15**
Price*	**70**	**46**	**66%**	**27**
Albany, NY	**16**	**10**	**63%**	**6**
Seattle	**35**	**21**	**60%**	**13**
Boston	**40**	**23**	**58%**	**7**
Miami	**70**	**40**	**57%**	**18**
Salt Lake City	**30**	**17**	**57%**	**6**
Washington, DC	35	19	54%	13
San Francisco	60	32	53%	15
Tampa	4	2	50%	1
Des Moines	85	42	49%	23
Pittsburgh	40	19	48%	9
Atlanta	60	28	47%	11
Birmingham	40	18	45%	6
Los Angeles	75	34	45%	18
Philadelphia	60	26	43%	14
Houston	65	27	42%	13
Newark	65	26	40%	18
New York	175	63	36%	45
New Orleans		4		4
U.S. Total	1139	584	51%	309
UK				
Edinburgh	**22**	**14**	**64%**	**9**
London	50	21	42%	12
UK Total	72	35	49%	21
Int'l totals	**1399**	**737**	**55%**	**394**
Should be	**1350**	**771**	**57%**	

* *Increased quota*

'Thousands of us think what's in that paper'

Continued from front page
ago and noticed that 41 miners bought copies but only four subscribed. 'We have to get those numbers up,' he said."

Twelve miners, all of them Navajo, subscribed there and among members of Operating Engineers Local 953 in nearby Farmington, New Mexico.

The response is strong in the Midwest too, especially among meat packers.

"Several of us visited Norfolk, Nebraska, last weekend," wrote Mary Martin from Des Moines, Iowa. "We sold the *Militant* at the afternoon shift on Friday, February 17, at the gate of Tyson Fresh Meats here. Thirty-four workers bought the paper. It was the last shift working, since Tyson closed the plant that night. Workers said their supervisors informed them of the closure two days earlier. Tyson also shut down another plant in West Point, Nebraska. To date workers have been told nothing about compensation."

Some 300 Somali and other workers at the Norfolk plant had walked out and organized other protests to demand restoration of prayer breaks and won that in the last union contract in December.

"The next two days we had six house meetings with former Tyson and other workers, including current and former subscribers," Martin said. "We sold three subs and got two endorsements for the Militant Fighting Fund. One of the highlights of the meeting was talking with Dina Tovar, 20, who had been interviewed by the *Militant* around the last union contract a few weeks ago. 'We do all the work, we make everything, and they put us on the street,' she said, as she renewed her subscription."

"Another high point was on the way back to Des Moines. At a gas station we noticed a Latina woman with a license plate on her car that said WONG. I introduced myself and it turned out she is from a Mexican-Chinese family and proud of her roots. As soon as I showed her the new Pathfinder book, *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*, she bought it, along with the *Militant*."

Last week, 191 people subscribed—104 renewals and 87 introductory subs. It was the best single week of the effort. For the remainder of the campaign, an average of 205 subs are needed per week to meet the overall quota, a slight increase in pace.

Distributors in two new areas—Tampa and Detroit—are now listed on the chart.

Join the effort! Order your bundle or contact distributors nearest you to take part in teams they organize (see directory on page 8).

Coal company suit pushed back

Continued from front page

in September 2004 as part of the mine owners' attempts to strangle a UMWA organizing campaign at its Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah. The mining company and its closely allied International Association of United Workers Union (IAUWU), who are the plaintiffs, initially cited over 120 newspapers, organizations, and individuals that backed the miners' fight to unionize, or wrote about what the miners had to say in the struggle. All the defendants were charged with making defamatory statements that allegedly damaged the mine's owners. The 16 miners and the UMWA were also charged with violating federal labor laws.

The plaintiffs amended and began serving their complaint in December 2004, within days of a union representation election. The company fired 30 miners who supported the UMWA as the vote approached. Many of these fired workers are defendants in the lawsuit.

A first hearing was held on the case in June 2005. Judge Benson instructed the plaintiffs at the time to rewrite what he called an amorphous lawsuit to make it clear who was being sued, for what, and who was specifically damaged. Many of the original defendants were dropped when C.W. Mining and the IAUWU rewrote the lawsuit last July.

Nine attorneys representing the various defendants sat to the judge's left in the courtroom. Sitting behind these lawyers were Berthila Leon, Bill Estrada, Guillermo Hernandez, and Alyson Kennedy—four of the miners named in the suit; Mike Dalpiaz, international vice president of UMWA District 22, and Roy Fernandez, an organizer for the union in the West; *Militant* editor Argiris Malapanis; three supporters of the Militant Fighting Fund; and directors of Utah Jobs with Justice.

Attorney Mark Hansen, representing the IAUWU, and Carl Kingston, for C.W. Mining, sat to the right of the judge. Hansen spoke on behalf of both of them throughout the hearing.

Reporters for the *Salt Lake Tribune*, *Deseret Morning News*, and the *Militant* covered the hearing.

'Best defamation claim?'

A good portion of the hearing was taken up by Judge Benson questioning Jeffrey Hunt, attorney for the *Deseret Morning News*, about the legal basis for dismissing the case against the two dailies.

The judge asked Mark Hansen for the plaintiffs' best example of a defamation. He added at this point in the proceedings that the *Militant*'s attorney Randy Dryer might have a tougher case than the other two newspapers.

Hansen pointed to a *Deseret News* editorial that said Co-Op miners were "fired for trying to organize a union." This was false and caused public ridicule for the company because the miners were not fired but quit, Hansen claimed. The judge questioned the example noting that opinion pieces like editorials have extra protections against libel claims. "Who is suffering" from that statement, he repeatedly asked the company lawyers.

The judge then asked why C.W. Mining and IAUWU filed such a serious lawsuit against two longstanding Utah newspapers without direct evidence that someone was truly injured. Is that a proper use of the court? he asked.

Same legal questions for 'Militant'

Randy Dryer, representing the *Militant*, pointed out the same legal principles apply in this case to the newsweekly as to the *Salt Lake Tribune* and *Deseret Morning News.* The *Militant* articles cited as defamatory contain the same statements made by miners, the UMWA, and others, as those printed in the two dailies.

Dryer told the court the suit against the *Militant* should be dismissed for an additional reason. The plaintiffs failed to comply with the judge's instruction at the June 14 hearing to rewrite the lawsuit so each defendant would know exactly who is being sued, for what alleged defamations, and who was harmed.

Dryer said that while some attempt was made to carry out the judge's instructions in regards to the Salt Lake dailies, no such attempt was made with the *Militant.* The plaintiffs "just repackaged" their alleged defamations and added eight new articles to the lawsuit. Virtually every article and editorial the *Militant* published since September 2003 about the fight at Co-Op is cited in the lawsuit.

Dryer also emphasized the issues in this case touch on important questions of public concern. "Miners' safety is in the news," he said, referring to the spate of miners killed on the job this year. One of the main questions in the fight at Co-Op was safety, Dryer said, noting that part of that mine was shut down recently when a fire forced the evacuation of 10 miners.

In response, Hansen said the *Militant* was not in the same category as the *Tribune* and *Deseret News.* The allegations against the *Militant* "are much broader, more numerous. There are many more statements that can be attributed to the authors of articles," he said. It may be possible for the court to dismiss the case against the two dailies, but not the *Militant,* he added.

Hansen insisted the coal company would need "discovery" to prove its charges against the *Militant* and other defendants. Discovery would allow C.W. Mining's attorneys to probe the *Militant* and other defendants for a wide range of information and documentation relating to the case.

Heavy hand to stifle organizing

UMWA attorney Judy Rivlin described the C.W. Mining lawsuit as a "heavy hand trying to stifle union organizing at this mine, in Utah, and around the country." Regarding the numerous defamation charges against the UMWA, the union finds itself in the same position as the *Militant*, she said. Additional charges of immigration law violations, fraud, and racketeering were also lodged against the union and the miners when the case was rewritten.

Rivlin told the court the Co-Op bosses have no legal standing for most of their claims. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is ruling on charges and countercharges by the company and the union in the dispute, she pointed out. Because the case is open the NLRB proceedings take precedence over action by a federal court. Equally inappropriate, she said, is the company's attempt to bring immigration charges against the union and the miners.

Richard Rosenblatt, attorney for the 16 Co-Op miners, pressed the same point. "How can the company say someone working for you without proper documentation is injurious?" he said. "How is that damaging to them?"

The attorney pointed to statements by the miners that the bosses' lawsuit describes as slanders. "Alyson Kennedy, a Co-Op miner is cited in the lawsuit saying, 'We were fired from our jobs for trying to organize a union,' and 'Female employees still don't have a separate bathroom to shower,'" he said. "How are those statements defamatory?"

Rosenblatt also said the way the suit was served made it clear it was filed to intimidate the miners. Co-Op miners were served the court papers on their way to exercise their right to vote in a union representation election.

'Illegals' can't expect higher wages

According to Co-Op's lawyers the defendants were guilty of "hundreds of acts aimed at defaming and injuring" the company.

The workers got jobs illegally and defrauded the company, Hansen said. They then went to the UMWA to help them "muscle C.W. Mining" to give them higher wages and benefits they knew they were not entitled to because they were "illegals."

As a result of the workers' actions and the extensive publicity generated by the struggle, Hansen said, C.W. Mining was unable to hire qualified replacement workers, could not fulfill coal sale contracts, and many vendors would not sell the company spare parts.

The judge said it looked more like the company was damaged by the adverse publicity coming about because of the labor dispute, rather than the fact the workers might not have had proper work papers.

Wasn't it true the workers felt the IAUWU didn't represent them? the judge asked. When Hansen claimed his client stuck up for the miners, the judge interjected: Were the workers then trying to get rid of the IAUWU "for absolutely no good reason?"

Judge's ruling

Addressing why he was not making a decision from the bench on the *Militant*'s motions, the judge said he thought the company lawyer "was correct" that the volume of articles cited was both qualitatively and quantitatively different for the *Militant.* Benson added that he shared some of the concerns expressed by attorneys for the *Militant* and the UMWA that the lawsuit had failed to make clear who was being sued and for what.

Hansen told the *Deseret Morning News* following the hearing that the coal company and the IAUWU would likely not appeal the judge's ruling on the dismissal of the case against the two Salt Lake papers.

Tyson closes two Nebraska plants



Lincoln Journal Star/Eric Gregory

Somali workers (above) and other Tyson employees had won prayer breaks in union contract before the February plant closings in West Point and Norfolk, Nebraska.

Miners back labor defense case

Continued from front page

cal, encouraged members to endorse and contribute. Wanda Benally added her name and took flyers to post up at work. Robert Buckner, treasurer of the local, asked for a letter soliciting financial support from organizers of the fund so the local can send a donation.

The following day, Kennedy and this reporter, traveled to Window Rock, the capital of the Navajo Nation, where they spoke at a meeting of United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Local 1332.

Sixteen UMWA members who work at the McKinley surface mine endorsed the Militant Fighting Fund. They include Samuel Johnson, president; Alvin Blackgoat, financial secretary; and Wilbur Willie, Sr., chair of the local's political action committee.

Many expressed appreciation for the *Militant*'s honest coverage of the Co-Op miners' struggle, and also for its reporting on numerous battles of miners on the Navajo Nation.

"The support among miners in New Mexico and Arizona, along with other prominent endorsements, helps build the kind of labor rights and free speech fight that can have a bearing on the outcome of the C.W. Mining lawsuit," said in an interview Argiris Malapanis, editor of the *Militant* who is also a defendant in the case. "There are big stakes in defending the rights of a newspaper like the *Militant*—which proudly states on its masthead that it's published in the interests of working people—to report accurately on workers' struggles. The coal bosses and other employers want to stifle the right of workers to tell their stories and have them published, including about unsafe working conditions, *before people die on the job,* or write articles themselves about struggles they are involved in.

"Backing every effort to organize the mines and other work places, and expanding support for the Militant Fighting Fund, which vigorously publicizes the fight of all the defendants to dismiss the coal boss harassment suit, is key to winning this case," said Malapanis.

In Beaumont, Texas, International Longshoremen's Association Local 21 signed on last week. United Auto Workers Local 2188 at the Delphi plant in Fitzgerald, Georgia, endorsed, too, and contributed $300.

So far in February, 217 new endorsers—including students, leaders of immigrant rights and church groups, and many unionists—have signed for the Militant Fighting Fund.

Endorsements and contributions can be sent to Militant Fighting Fund, P.O. Box 520994, Salt Lake City, Utah 84152; Fax (801) 924-5910; E-mail: *MilitantFightingFund@yahoo.com*

ON THE PICKET LINE

Illinois coal miners conduct one-day walkout

DES MOINES, Iowa—Members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) walked out of two central Illinois coal mines February 16, after a company doctor cleared a miner for work even though his personal physician said he should not. Members of UMWA Local 1969 at the Crown II mine in Virden, Illinois, began the strike and were joined by Local 12 members at the Crown III mine in nearby Girard that night, according to one of the strikers, who requested to not be identified. Both mines are owned by Freeman United Coal. The miners returned to work the following afternoon after the company threatened to seek a court injunction against them.

—Kevin Dwire

ExxonMobil spills oil in Texas workers' district

HOUSTON—Working people across from the ExxonMobil refinery in Baytown, Texas, want compensation for the release of oily film droplets that blanketed their community January 22. Residents of Archia Courts, a federally subsidized public housing neighborhood, reported hearing sounds like thunder before the release. A 150,000-barrel tank on the refinery's perimeter became overheated to 200 degrees Fahrenheit, spilling thousands of gallons of process gas oil used by the complex's catalytic cracker units to produce light hydrocarbons. ExxonMobil set a profit record in 2005 of $36.1 billion.

—Amanda Ulman

Germany: public workers strike



Reuters

Hospital workers in Hanover, Germany, strike February 1 to protest government's plan to extend the workweek from 38.5 to 40 hours without extra pay. Strikes by some 40,000 public sector workers, organized by the Verdi union, expanded to more than half of the country's 16 states February 13.

Coal mine explosion in Mexico traps 65 workers

Continued from front page

stopped by federal troops. The Mexican army has deployed some 250 soldiers, and together with various police agencies have cordoned off the mine to all but rescue crews.

Those waiting here for news of the 65 know about the poor safety conditions at the mine. "We want the company to pay attention to what the workers say," said Romelia Bordas, a preschool teacher who has friends in the mine. "Workers have reported that there is [methane] gas in the mine, but the company doesn't do anything because they don't want to stop production."

"All along I told them that mine is unsafe," Zacarías Cruz, whose brother and brother-in-law are among the 65 trapped, told the Mexican daily *La Jornada*. "But you've got to go in out of necessity. I worked there five years, and there was a lot of gas. Down there it was a time bomb."

A dozen workers who were nearest to the entrance were rescued soon after the February 19 gas explosion. They are being treated for burns and broken bones. These workers report that there were two explosions shortly after 2:00 a.m., well into the third shift Sunday morning. Most of the workers were cut off, many about a mile into the mine.

Volunteer rescue teams, including workers from nearby mines, have been working around the clock to clear rubble, shore up the roof, and search for possible survivors. The company claims the miners had six hours of oxygen available to them located within the mine.

"We have the right to stop working if there is something unsafe, but many don't because of fear of reprisals by the company," said René Limón González, a recently injured long wall miner from the nearby Mimosa #7 mine, who was among the crowd waiting for news on the rescue effort. Like Pasta de Conchos, the Mimosa mine is organized by the National Mine Workers' Union (SNTM).

Poor pay, unsafe conditions

Immediately after the explosion, SNTM spokesperson Consuelo Aguilar told the media, "We have pressed for better safety conditions as well as for better pay at the mines." She also called for an investigation to determine the responsibility of any company officials for the explosion.

Speaking to reporters in front of the mine, SNTM general secretary Napoleón Gómez Urrutia protested the company's refusal to stop production in face of dangerous conditions. "Not even a gold mine is worth the life of one worker," he said.

Gomez said that of the 65 people trapped in the mine, 25 are union members, 36 are contract workers, and four are bosses. "Right now what's most important is to rescue these brothers, union and nonunion, hopefully alive," he said.



Militant/Naomi Craine

Romelia Bordas, left, waits February 21 outside Mexican mine where 65 miners are trapped.

While the mine owners encourage hope for good news on the 65 who have been trapped underground, they have instructed a nearby cemetery to dig fresh graves.

Pasta de Conchos, a shaft mine that employs about 300 workers, is owned by Industrial Minera Mexico, part of Grupo Mexico, the world's third-largest copper producer. It has operations in Mexico, Peru, and the United States, and is also a major coal producer in Mexico. Sabinas is located in the northern state of Coahuila, which contains 95 percent of the country's coal reserves, producing 12 million tons per year.

Days before the explosion, "the gas meter showed methane levels of 2.8 and 2.7 percent," Herbey Flores Moreno, one of the surviving workers, told the daily *Zócalo*. The mine machinery is supposed to cut off when methane reaches 1 percent. According to Flores, the bosses often had miners work with high levels of gas, saying the meters were poorly calibrated. The company claims that the last methane reading before the explosion showed just 0.7 percent.

Most of the miners are paid only about $50 a week. Limón pointed out that "contractors are paid less than full-time employees, they get the heavier work," and face greater risk without union protection. He added that they even get smaller and older emergency oxygen units that last about 45 minutes. The union has opposed the expanded use of contract miners by the coal bosses, who use this as a way to weaken the union.

María Luisa Martínez Sánchez, who has been outside the mine since the day of the explosion, said, "My husband is trapped in the mine. He is a contract worker and earns 400 pesos [about $40] per week." Other miners earn about 600 pesos or more per week, depending on their job and experience.

The disaster has caused a political crisis in a contentious election year. Federal, state, and local politicians have streamed into Sabinas. Reporters from around the world are on the scene, and the national media is running hourly coverage.

"It's a shame that this has to happen for the press to come pay attention to what's happening to the miners," said Ricardo Guerrero, a construction worker whose brother-in-law is among those still in the mine. "The companies care about their own interests, not the workers."

Naomi Craine contributed to this article.

Appeal to our readers

The 'Militant' has spent over $3,500 the last month to provide first-hand coverage from the coalfields of North America and Mexico, like the article above. We plan to continue, with your help. Please contribute generously. Send your check or money order to The Militant at 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

25 CENTS
THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

March 6, 1981

The South African regime is carrying out a secret war against Angola and its people.

Ever since the end of the Angolan war of 1975–76—during which a South African invasion was beaten back by Angolan and Cuban troops—South African forces have repeatedly struck across the border. They admit doing so, but claim that their only targets are guerrilla camps of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), which is fighting for Namibia's independence from South African rule.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

March 5, 1956

Reflecting the anger of millions in America at the mass arrests of leaders of the Montgomery anti–Jim Crow bus boycott movement, a drive has been initiated by top Negro religious leaders for a March 28 "National Deliverance Day" of prayer and protest.

Negro officials of the clothing, laundry and sleeping car porters unions met Saturday with [Adam Clayton] Powell to discuss plans for the "Deliverance Day" demonstration. However, still lacking is the one ingredient essential for the full success of the demonstration—the full weight of support of the national AFL-CIO.

The failure thus far of the leaders of the union movement to extend this support imposes sharp limitations on the movement.

The problem was posed this way by a Negro worker in a large New Jersey auto plant. "The Negroes in my department have been talking about the stoppage for several days now. They want to support it but they all raise the problem that if the union doesn't back them how can they risk knocking off the job?"

THE MILITANT
Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

March 1, 1931

In Lawrence, Mass. a total of 10,000 textile workers have struck the American Woolen Co.'s mills against an increased speed up system and a wage cut. These strikers immediately began militant mass picketing. It has thus become one of the early small beginnings of a rising labor movement.

On Feb. 16th, 1931, the strike began with only 33 workers coming out of the Washington Mills combing dept. against the instituted new schedules. By Feb. 21st it increased to 8,000. Despite the fact that only fragmentary union organization exists the strike continued to grow to embrace 10,000 workers.

The workers demanded time and a half for overtime, double time for holidays, withdrawal of efficiency experts, no discrimination and recognition of the Mill committees to settle special grievances.

New Cuban edition of ‘Making History’ launched in Havana



Militant/Martín Koppel

Panel of speakers presenting new Cuban edition of *Hacienda historia* (Making History) and two other books at a February 7 meeting at the Havana International Book Fair. From left: Harry Villegas, José Ramón Fernández, Mayra Mendoza, Mary-Alice Waters, Hermes Pérez Caso, and Iraida Aguirrechu.

BY BRIAN TAYLOR AND JONATHAN SILBERMAN

HAVANA—“In this book, you can see how ordinary working people became makers of something much bigger than each of us—the Cuban Revolution,” said Cuban general Harry Villegas. He was speaking to 60 people at a February 7 presentation of the book *Haciendo historia* (Making history) during the Havana International Book Fair.

Villegas is one of four generals in the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba interviewed in the book. Today Pombo—the nom de guerre taken by Villegas as a volunteer in the internationalist missions led by Ernesto Che Guevara in the Congo and Bolivia in the mid-1960s—serves as executive vice president of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution.

Pathfinder Press first published *Making History* in English in 1999. *Haciendo historia* was published in a limited run soon afterward in Spanish by Editora Política, the publishing house of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba. In 2001 Pathfinder also published the book in Spanish. The book fair presentation marked the reissue of the book by Editora Política in a run of 5,000 copies, all to be sold in Cuba. The larger-than-usual printing was made possible by the Special Plan of the Cuban Book Institute (ICL), funded by the Ministry of Culture.

“This plan was launched during the Special Period [in the 1990s], when resources were scarce following the collapse of the Soviet Union,” Iraida Aguirrechu, political affairs editor for Editora Política, told the *Militant*. Publishing houses submit proposals to a council made up of representatives of all publishers affiliated to the ICL, she said. This year the council approved several dozen titles for publishing and distribution under the plan. Prices are heavily subsidized to make the books broadly affordable for the Cuban people. These titles are being sold in each of the 35 cities across Cuba in which the nationwide book fair, which runs through mid-March, will take place.

“*Haciendo historia* contains interviews with Cuban generals Néstor López Cuba, Enrique Carreras, José Ramón Fernández, and Villegas,” Aguirrechu explained at the book presentation. She noted that the interviewers were leaders of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party, including the party’s national secretary, Jack Barnes. “It is a totally new book for all but a few Cuban readers,” she said. “Now with a big press run we can get the book around.”

Through the interviews, the generals recount the experiences that politically changed them under the U.S.-backed Fulgencio Batista dictatorship in the 1950s—experiences that led them and many other young people to join the revolutionary movement to overthrow that regime, becoming different people themselves in the process. They discuss how the workers and farmers of Cuba have defended their revolution in the decades since, from repelling the 1961 U.S.-organized mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs (known in Cuba as the victory of Playa Girón), to the October 1962 Cuban “missile” crisis, to today. And they address revolutionary Cuba’s record of internationalist solidarity, including each one’s various experiences, whether in Syria, Vietnam, the Congo, Angola, or Nicaragua.

“The interviews that make up this book are a powerful introduction to the Cuban Revolution for new generations of workers and youth awakening to political struggles of the toilers of the world,” Pathfinder president Mary-Alice Waters said at the meeting. Waters, who was also one of the interviewers, edited the book. (Her remarks appear on page 7.)

“What is told in *Haciendo historia* shows that anything is possible,” Villegas said in closing. “If the youth that we were at the time could achieve the objectives we set out for ourselves, then today our youth in Cuba can reach even higher goals because they are more educated and more steeped in revolutionary tradition.”

The event also included presentations of two other titles launched by Editora Política at the book fair: *Para vivir como tú vives* (To live as you live), a book by Mayra Mendoza about Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara that is aimed at young people, and *Labradores de sueños* (Cultivators of dreams) by Hermes Pérez Caso. A retired colonel who as a youth joined the Rebel Army in the 1956–58 revolutionary war, Pérez Caso was in the first class of 108 cadets in the Rebel Army’s Cadet School established days after Batista’s overthrow and was one of 55 to graduate in October 1960. In the book he tells how that school was established.

“The cadet school was set up under General Order No. 1, signed on Jan. 21, 1959, by Camilo Cienfuegos, who was head of the army general staff,” said Nelson González in an interview with the *Militant*. González, also one of the school’s 55 graduates, is today one of the principal leaders in Matanzas province of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution, a nationwide organization of Cubans who have taken part in revolutionary struggles at home or internationalist missions abroad.

“José Ramón Fernández was appointed head of the school,” González said. “Later he also headed its sister institution, the national School for Militia Heads in Matanzas, whose first course started in the summer of 1960.” Fernández, one of the generals interviewed in *Haciendo historia*, is today vice president of Cuba’s Council of Ministers.

“The two schools were central to the military training of thousands of people in the early years of the revolution,” González added. “Graduates, both men and women, would be assigned to train others who, in turn, would train a larger number. Many of their skills came from active experience. Several graduates of the cadet school were combatants at Playa Girón.” As chapters in the book explain, many were mobilized at the time of the Cuban “missile” crisis, and others fought in various internationalist combat missions.

“There is no better teacher than setting an example,” said José Ramón Fernández, who wrote the preface to *Labradores de sueños* and shared the platform at the launching.

Looking out into a crowd checkered with generations ranging from teenagers to veteran combatants of the 1959 revolutionary war, he emphasized, “All of us who fought in the revolution have an obligation to be examples. And there are hundreds, thousands of us.”

Alabama: methane buildup forces mine shutdown

BY CLAY DENNISON

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—On February 8 inspectors from the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) ordered the immediate evacuation of PinnOak Resources’ Oak Grove mine, located west of here. According to an MSHA report cited in the *Tuscaloosa News*, part of the ventilation system was found to be “saturated with an explosive mixture of methane.”

A written description by the federal agency stated, “Mine management failed to immediately correct a hazardous condition identified by a mine examiner on the Evening Shift of February 7, 2006.” It goes on to say that the mine examiner, or fireboss, took immediate steps to inform mine management of the conditions, but the bosses took no action to correct them or to evacuate the mine.

Mining operations continued until the following day, when an MSHA inspection revealed the high methane levels that the fireboss had reported. “The operator displayed a reckless disregard for the safety and health of the miners,” the MSHA report stated.

“The mine should have been evacuated. The question is why it wasn't,” said Wilson Maxwell, a miner at Oak Grove. Coal production resumed two days later.

A recent complaint filed with MSHA by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) alleges that a mine official threatened to fire miners who pointed out safety violations or refused to work in unsafe conditions. MSHA inspectors wrote more than 700 citations at Oak Grove in 2005.

“They don’t try to make it safe for the men,” said Oak Grove miner Glenn Davis. “They do things because the government says. We need to make it safe regardless of what the federal law says.”

The UMWA organizes the Oak Grove mine, along with the five other large underground mines in Alabama. Five of the six take coal from the same very deep seam, which is known for the large amount of methane it releases during mining. In 2001 explosions at the nearby Jim Walter Resources #5 Mine killed 13 miners.

The UMWA, the union district vice president, and two miners have filed a lawsuit against the state for lack of mine inspections. Alabama has three inspectors to cover more than 500 mines, quarries, and gravel pits.

Clay Dennison is a member of UMWA Local 2133 at the Oak Grove mine.

A powerful introduction to Cuban Revolution

A book for new generations awakening to political struggles of world's toilers

The following is the presentation by Mary-Alice Waters to a meeting, held during the 15th Havana International Book Fair in Cuba, to launch a new edition of Haciendo historia: Entrevistas con cuatro generales de las Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Cuba *(Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces), by Enrique Carreras, Harry Villegas, José Ramón Fernández, and Néstor López Cuba (see accompanying article). Waters, who conducted the interviews with the four FAR generals and then turned them into a book, is the editor of* Haciendo historia *and the president of Pathfinder Press. Copyright © 2006 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

Publication of this new edition of *Haciendo historia,* as part of the special plan of the Cuban Book Institute, means that for the first time this invaluable book will be available throughout Cuba as the book fair taking place here in Havana this week spreads over the coming month to other cities across the island. Thus, this printing of some 5,000 copies merits celebration, as well as this special presentation here today by two of the book's four authors—José Ramón Fernández and Harry Villegas.

It is especially appropriate that *Haciendo historia* is being reissued on the eve of the 45th anniversary of the historic victory of the Cuban people at Playa Girón. That was "Washington's *first* military defeat in the Americas," as the title of another book published by Pathfinder, of which José Ramón Fernández is also one of the authors, emphasizes.[1] The character and significance of that victory—for Cuba, for the United States, *for the world*—is one of the threads that runs throughout the interviews that make up this book.



Militant photos by Martín Koppel (above); Jonathan Silberman (inset)

Above: A student speaks from the audience after February 7 presentation at the Havana International Book Fair of the new Cuban edition of *Haciendo historia* (Making History). Inset: Iraida Aguirrechu, political affairs editor of the Cuban publishing house Editora Política, speaks about the book.

An excellent suggestion

What became *Haciendo historia* had its origins nine years ago during another anniversary of Playa Girón. Several reporters for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*—today *El Militante*—a socialist newsweekly published in the United States, were here in Cuba for that occasion. We mentioned to compañeros at Editora Política with whom we were collaborating on a number of editorial projects that we wanted to take advantage of that moment to write something about Playa Girón. Compañera Iraida [Aguirrechu] asked if we would be interested in interviewing some compañeros who fought there.

Needless to say, we thought that was an excellent suggestion—but little did we know what Iraida had in mind. Within a matter of days, much to our surprise and appreciation, she had lined up interviews with three generals of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba—Fernández, who commanded the main column that defeated the invasion; Enrique Carreras, who commanded the air force; and Néstor López Cuba, one of the tank commanders.

Later that same year, we were also able to interview compañero Pombo [Harry Villegas] on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of Che's [Ernesto Che Guevara] death in combat in Bolivia and the return to Cuba of what Fidel so aptly called "Che's reinforcement brigade," when the remains of Che and others who fought and died in that internationalist mission were laid to rest in Santa Clara.[2]

The first edition of *Haciendo historia* was published in English in 1999 by Pathfinder and in Spanish the following year by Editora Política. Soon thereafter, because the demand in both the United States and Cuba was greater than Editora Política could meet given the severe limitations of the Special Period, Pathfinder also brought out an edition in Spanish that has remained available ever since. Over the years, we have sold some 4,000 copies altogether of the English and Spanish, the large majority of those in the United States.

Introduction to Cuban Revolution

For us, the interviews that make up this book are a powerful introduction to the Cuban Revolution for new generations of workers and youth awakening to political struggles of the toilers of the world. They often know little about the Cuban Revolution. As they become involved in the social, economic, and political struggles born of their own experiences in capitalist America, however, they begin learning how the press lies about what they are fighting for and distorts their stories. And they begin to suspect that the picture of Cuba portrayed by Washington and the big business press is probably also distorted. They begin searching for the truth. That's where we come in. In this book they find that truth.

They find the men and women of Cuba who in their millions ceased being simply objects of history and became its makers as well, opening the door to the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

Soon after the book was first published, a steelworker in the city of Pittsburgh who had just read it commented to me that he had been struck by two things above all—about which he had either known nothing, or had had a completely distorted picture: the *political* caliber of the leaders of the FAR, and their humanity. Both are qualities that workers in the United States know very concretely from their own experiences are absent from the officer corps of the imperialist armies. But these qualities are indispensable to the fighting vanguard of the oppressed and exploited. Today that lesson is once again more timely than ever.

Confidence in own capacities

A final comment.

Reading this book, young people, especially, gain confidence in their own capacities, in the fact that revolutions by necessity are the work, first and foremost, of youth. But to be victorious, they must also learn to combine their energy, lack of fear of consequences, and unfettered spirit with discipline and knowledge of the hard-won lessons of revolutionary struggle by those who started before them.

Haciendo historia will help them in this task. And it is to their future struggles and victories that this book is dedicated.

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1. On April 15, 1961, 1,500 Cuban mercenaries organized, financed, and deployed by Washington invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs on the island's southern coast. In fewer than 72 hours they were defeated by Cuba's revolutionary militias, armed forces, and police. On April 19 the remaining invaders were captured at Playa Girón (Girón Beach), the name Cubans use for the invasion and battle. The story is recounted in Pathfinder's *Playa Girón/Bay of Pigs: Washington's First Military Defeat in the Americas* by Fidel Castro and José Ramón Fernández.

2. In late 1966 Ernesto Che Guevara, the Argentine-born leader of the Cuban Revolution, led a detachment of Cuban internationalists to Bolivia, where they joined with revolutionists from Bolivia and Peru in forming a guerrilla movement to overthrow the U.S.-backed military regime. Wounded and captured by the Bolivian army in a CIA-organized operation on October 8, 1967, Guevara was murdered the next day. In 1997 the remains of Guevara and other combatants were found in an unmarked grave in Bolivia and returned to Cuba. At an October 1997 ceremony in Santa Clara marking the interment of Guevara and six others from Cuba, Bolivia, and Peru, Cuban president Fidel Castro said: "I view Che and his men as reinforcements, as a detachment of invincible combatants."

Federal appeals court holds hearing on granting new trial to Cuban 5

BY BARBARA BOWMAN AND CHERYL GOERTZ

ATLANTA—On February 14, the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals here heard arguments on whether five Cuban revolutionaries locked up in U.S. prisons received an impartial hearing in their trial in Miami. The five men have been imprisoned since 1998 on frame-up charges brought by the U.S. government.

Gerardo Hernández, Fernando González, René González, Antonio Guerrero, and Ramon Labañino were convicted by a U.S. federal court in 2001 of "conspiracy to act as an unregistered foreign agent." Guerrero, Hernández, and Labañino were also convicted of "conspiracy to commit espionage," and Hernández of "conspiracy to commit murder." They are serving sentences from 15 years to a double-life term.

Defense lawyers argued that it was impossible to get an impartial jury in Miami, given the hostility of a large number of Cuban counterrevolutionaries who live in Miami and of the local media to the Cuban government. At the time of jury selection, they pointed out, protest demonstrations on the one-year anniversary of the return of Elián González to his father in Cuba whipped up these sentiments.

Last August a three-judge panel of the same appeals court overturned the convictions and ordered a new trial in a different location. In November the full 12-judge appeals court agreed to a request by Washington to review this decision. The February 14 hearing began this process.

Supporters of the Cuban Five held a press conference immediately after the court hearing and a community meeting at Spelman College later that evening. Among the speakers were Andrés Gómez of the Antonio Maceo Brigade and the Miami coordinator of the Free the Five campaign; Gloria La Riva, president of the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five; and supporters of the campaign to free the five from Germany, Italy, Belgium, Argentina, and Puerto Rico.

Antonio Guerrero's sister, Maria Eugenia Guerrero, thanked those present and encouraged them to continue their efforts. "If the Cuban Five really caused harm to the American people and government, the media would have made it known," she said. "They are silent because they know there is no truth to these charges. It is up to us to break the silence. We are sure if more people in the United States know the facts, justice can be done."

‘Overturning system of exploitation by any means necessary’

As part of celebrating Black History Month, we are running the excerpts below (in place of the regular Books of the Month column) from an interview Malcolm X granted Jan. 18, 1965, to Jack Barnes, national chairman of the Young Socialist Alliance, and Barry Sheppard, a staff writer for the Militant. *Both Sheppard and Barnes were members of the editorial board of the* Young Socialist *magazine. At a later meeting with Barnes, Malcolm went over and approved the final text, which then appeared in the March-April 1965 issue of the* Young Socialist. *The entire interview is available in* Malcolm X Talks to Young People *(see ad below). Copyright © 1965 by Betty Shabazz and Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*



Maja Zimmermann

Malcolm X (center) with U.S. volunteers at high school in Tanzania for exiled members of liberation organizations from countries across southern Africa, October 1964.

MALCOLM X INTERVIEW WITH ‘YOUNG SOCIALIST’

YOUNG SOCIALIST: What are the aims of your new organization?

MALCOLM X: There are two organizations. There’s the Muslim Mosque, Inc., which is religious. Its aim is to create an atmosphere and facilities in which people who are interested in Islam can get a better understanding of Islam. The aim of the other organization, the Organization of Afro-American Unity, is to use whatever means necessary to bring about a society in which the 22 million Afro-Americans are recognized and respected as human beings.

YOUNG SOCIALIST: How do you define black nationalism, with which you have been identified?

MALCOLM X: I used to define Black nationalism as the idea that the Black man should control the economy of his community, the politics of his community, and so forth.

But when I was in Africa in May, in Ghana, I was speaking with the Algerian ambassador who is extremely militant and is a revolutionary in the true sense of the word (and has his credentials as such for having carried on a successful revolution against oppression in his country). When I told him that my political, social, and economic philosophy was Black nationalism, he asked me very frankly: Well, where did that leave him? Because he was white. He was an African, but he was Algerian, and to all appearances, he was a white man. And he said if I define my objective as the victory of Black nationalism, where does that leave him? Where does that leave revolutionaries in Morocco, Egypt, Iraq, Mauritania? So he showed me where I was alienating people who were true revolutionaries dedicated to overturning the system of exploitation that exists on this earth by any means necessary.

So, I had to do a lot of thinking and reappraising of my definition of Black nationalism. Can we sum up the solution to the problems confronting our people as Black nationalism? And if you notice, I haven’t been using the expression for several months. But I still would be hard pressed to give a specific definition of the overall philosophy which I think is necessary for the liberation of the Black people in this country….

YOUNG SOCIALIST: How much influence does revolutionary Africa have on the thinking of Black people in this country?

MALCOLM X: All the influence in the world. You can’t separate the militancy that’s displayed on the African continent from the militancy that’s displayed right here among American Blacks. The positive image that is developing of Africans is also developing in the minds of Black Americans, and, consequently they develop a more positive image of themselves. Then they take more positive steps—actions.

So you can’t separate the African revolution from the mood of the Black man in America. Neither could the colonization of Africa be separated from the menial position that the Black man in this country was satisfied to stay in for so long. Since Africa has gotten its independence through revolution, you’ll notice the stepped-up cry against discrimination that has appeared in the Black community….

YOUNG SOCIALIST: What is your opinion of the Democratic Party?

MALCOLM X: The Democratic Party is responsible for the racism that exists in this country, along with the Republican Party. The leading racists in this country are Democrats. Goldwater isn’t the leading racist—he’s a racist but not the leading racist. The racists who have influence in Washington, D.C., are Democrats. If you check, whenever any kind of legislation is suggested to mitigate the injustices that Negroes suffer in this country, you will find that the people who line up against it are members of Lyndon B. Johnson’s party. The Dixiecrats are Democrats. The Dixiecrats are only a subdivision of the Democratic Party, and the same man over the Democrats is over the Dixiecrats….

YOUNG SOCIALIST: What is your opinion of the worldwide struggle now going on between capitalism and socialism?

MALCOLM X: It is impossible for capitalism to survive, primarily because the system of capitalism needs some blood to suck. Capitalism used to be like an eagle, but now it’s more like a vulture. It used to be strong enough to go and suck anybody’s blood whether they were strong or not. But now it has become more cowardly, like the vulture, and it can only suck the blood of the helpless. As the nations of the world free themselves, then capitalism has less victims, less to suck, and it becomes weaker and weaker. It’s only a matter of time in my opinion before it will collapse completely.

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EDITORIAL

All miners need union, whatever their tongue

Continued from front page

Coal, the "work ethic" in the region has declined and "attitudes have changed in the existing workforce, which affects attendance, drug use, and...productivity." Massey's scorn for workers from Mexico and elsewhere needs no elaboration.

Amid a spreading mine safety crisis and the bosses' brutal drive to boost output and profits, employers—with the help of the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) and other federal agencies—are pointing the finger at workers. To hear it from them, alcohol and drug abuse are the biggest cause of deadly accidents! To hear it from the big-business media, it's immigrant workers who drive down wages!

But it's the intensifying competition for markets worldwide that's putting the health and safety of workers and farmers on the capitalists' chopping block, along with our wages, pensions, medical care, and simple dignity on the job.

Massey is no pioneer on this antilabor course. C.W. Mining, which owns the Co-Op mine in Utah, has been in the vanguard of the coal barons' efforts both to superexploit immigrant labor and at the same time attempt to undermine working-class solidarity and forestall unionization. The company fired its entire workforce, mostly workers from Mexico, in September 2003 after the miners demanded safe job conditions, livable wages, dignity, and representation by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

But the Co-Op miners, whose highly productive labor had enabled the bosses to pile up profits year after year, fought back. They waged a 10-month strike that won widespread solidarity in the West and beyond, forcing the bosses to offer to reinstate them. The coal bosses' aim in doing so was baldly stated by Mark Hansen, attorney for C.W. Mining and its affiliated "union," at a February 17 court hearing in Salt Lake City on a harassment lawsuit filed by the coal operator against the Co-Op miners, the UMWA, and others, including the *Militant*. Hansen told the judge that the company agreed to the labor-board-brokered settlement because it expected most strikers to not return and thus "lose their right to vote."

But the bosses miscalculated. Many workers did go back and forced the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to organize a union representation election. C.W. Mining fired most of the miners on the eve of that union vote on the pretext they did not have proper work papers. And it tried to intimidate them from exercising their right to pick the union of their choice by serving miners with defamation and other charges *literally on their way to the voting booth*!

The Co-Op miners persisted—becoming an example for the entire labor movement—by demanding the NLRB count the ballots from that vote and order their reinstatement. And they have fought, along with the UMWA, the *Militant*, and others to defeat the bosses' harassment lawsuit. (It should come as no surprise that Massey has filed a similar defamation suit against the UMWA.)

Hansen also told the court the Co-Op miners had enlisted the UMWA to "muscle" the company to give them higher wages and benefits they knew they "were not entitled to" since they were "illegals." The point is unmistakable: undocumented workers can be paid unlivable wages, treated like dirt, and subjected to death-trap conditions so long as they don't make a fuss about it. So long as they don't organize a union.

What better argument for working-class solidarity! Just like the Massey bosses' false and degrading depiction of Appalachian miners as lazy drunks and drug addicts.

But the coal barons are digging their own graves. They are helping to build an alliance of miners and other working people—from different origins, white and Black, men and women—from Appalachia to the Rockies and beyond.

Solidarity is the foundation of success in any labor struggle. When workers strike or fight to organize a union, they appeal for support, and the employers and their government try to block such support and whip up opposition. They do so in large part by trying to play on competition among workers for jobs—pitting one group against another.

The need for working-class solidarity transcends borders, as shown by the mine disaster in Mexico. Workers in the U.S. and our brothers and sisters south of the Rio Grande have a common enemy—the employing classes—and common interests as working people. Grupo Mexico, whose profit greed may claim the lives of 65 miners in San Juan de Sabinas, also owns Asarco, a U.S. copper giant that forced 1,500 miners in Arizona and Texas on a four-month strike last year.

Crucial to organizing working-class solidarity in the United States—and key to reversing the continued weakening of the union movement—is recognizing undocumented immigrants as fellow workers in every sense and reaching out to organize them into the ranks of labor.

Working people have no interest in making demands on the employers to stop hiring immigrants. To the contrary. The internationalization of the working class in the United States and other imperialist countries strengthens our class. By organizing all coal miners and other working people—native- and foreign-born—workers can draw *everyone* into enforcing safety on the job. The unions can take the lead in overcoming language hurdles by organizing safety classes in Spanish and other tongues, as well as producing leaflets in various languages and providing oral translation as needed.

That's how the UMWA and many other unions were built in the United States. By workers from many lands.

This is the road to defend the working class and its allies in the United States and the world over from assaults by the employers—be it Massey, C.W. Mining, or Grupo Mexico.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

ALABAMA
Birmingham
U.S. Hands Off Iran! Speaker: representative, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 3, 7:30 p.m. 3029A Bessemer Rd. Tel.: (205) 780-0021.

CALIFORNIA
San Francisco
Malcolm X: The Man and His Ideas. Fri., March 3, 7:30 p.m. 3916 Mission St. Tel.: (415)584-2135

FLORIDA
Miami
Speakout against Boot Camp Killing of Martin Lee Anderson. Fri., March 3, Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 8365 N.E. 2nd Ave. #206. Tel.: (305) 756-4436.

NEW JERSEY
Newark
U.S. Hands Off Iran! Speaker: Ma'mud Shirvani. Fri., March 3, 8:00 p.m. 168 Bloomfield Ave., 2nd floor. Tel.: (973) 481-0077.

TEXAS
Houston
New Orleans Working People Protest Injustice. A panel featuring Howard Allen, New Orleans resident, retired seaman. Sun., March 5, 3:00 p.m., reception; 4:00 p.m., program 4800 W. 34th St., Suite C-51-A. Tel.: (713) 869-6550.

AUSTRALIA
Sydney
The Debate Over RU-486—Defend a Woman's Right to Choose Abortion. Speaker: Joanne Kuniansky. Sat., March 11, 7:00 p.m. 3/281-287 Beamish St., Campsie. Tel.: (02) 9718 9698.

NEW ZEALAND
Auckland
Censorship Hurts the Working Class: the Danish Cartoons Controversy. Fri., March 3, 7:00 p.m. Donation: $3. 7 Mason Ave., Otahuhu (upstairs above laundromat). Tel.: (09) 276-8885.

SWEDEN
Stockholm
Defend Labor Rights! Support Fight to Defeat Coal Boss Harassment Lawsuit. Fri., March 3, Dinner, 6:00 p.m.; program, 7:00 p.m. Bildhuggarvägen 17, 12144 Johanneshov. Tel.: 08 31 69 33.

LETTERS

Solidarity with Mexican miners

My name is Phil Polsom and I am the President of CEP [Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada] Local 890, which represents 31 of the miners that were trapped during the fire at Esterhazy potash mine. My guys were the ones cut off from contact with outside communication. I would just like to pass on words of encouragement to the families of the trapped miners in Mexico. I spent 26 hours without contact with my brothers and know firsthand the anguish this can cause. I would like to offer the prayers and thoughts from the 130 members of my local. If you could pass these thoughts on it would be greatly appreciated. We need to show our brothers and sisters around the world we can show Solidarity no matter where the borders.

Phil Polsom
Esterhazy, Saskatchewan

Militant *reporters who went to San Juan de Sabinas, Mexico, delivered this message, along with its translation into Spanish, to representatives of the National Mine Workers' Union of Mexico on the scene February 22.*

—Editor

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

British gov't uses cartoon dispute to boost 'war on terror'

BY PETER CLIFFORD,

EDINBURGH, Scotland—As protests continue against the publication of cartoons that satirize the Prophet Muhammad, the government of British prime minister Anthony Blair has moved closer to securing parliamentary backing for its package of "antiterrorism" laws that further restrict democratic rights. On February 15 the House of Commons voted to outlaw "glorifying" terrorism, which Blair said would allow police action against anyone with placards praising those who planted bombs on London subways July 7, 2005. The Terrorism Bill also extends police power to detain individuals without charges to 28 days. It requires approval by the House of Lords before becoming law.

London's initial response to demonstrations against cartoons in Danish and other European papers of Prophet Muhammad was to lend a sympathetic ear to the protesters. At the same time it took advantage of a February 3 London march, where several protesters held signs supporting the July 7 London bombing and chanted "Osama bin Laden," to advance curbs on the right to demonstrate. The Metropolitan Police said some demonstrators could be charged with "incitement to murder," the BBC reported. In the following weeks the Muslim Association of Britain and Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) worked with the police to prevent similar placards from being displayed at other protests. Inayat Bunglawala of the MCB called for police to "see if they can prosecute the extremists."

London also took advantage of the February 6 conviction of Muslim cleric Abu Hamza al-Masri to promote its "antiterrorism" campaign. Hamza was sentenced to seven years in prison on the charge that "at a public meeting [he] did solicit or encourage persons unknown to murder another person or persons unknown." He was also convicted of "using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour with the intention of stirring up racial hatred." The government's case against Hamza rested largely on a book in his possession called the Encyclopedia of the Afghan Jihad, and tapes and videos of him preaching.

Parliamentary opposition to government moves has come largely from the Conservative and Liberal Democrats, who have postured as defenders of freedom of speech. On January 31 they led a narrow defeat of the government in the wording of sections of its Religious and Race Hatred Bill.

The difference between the contending parties was slight. The final bill restricted the proposed offense to "threatening words and behaviour" rather than the government proposal to ban "insults and abuse." Member of Parliament George Galloway of the Respect Party, who joined protests by so-called moderate Muslims against the cartoons, sided with the government in the vote.

On February 13 the House of Commons approved a government bill for the introduction of ID cards for all passport applicants. Campaigning for the bill the day before the vote, Chancellor Gordon Brown told the BBC that "the British way of doing it is to be both tough on security measures and to build in proper systems of accountability." He said the government planned further measures, including a single security budget allowing the establishment of a new department of homeland security, and extension beyond 28 days of detention without charges.